[*Note.*—An asterisk (*) at the commencement of a speech indicates revision by the Member.]

IV

PETITION TO THE COUNCIL.

* Mr. R. Veerian :—"As per Standing Order No. 71, I present this petition in connexion with the Madras Hindu Religious Endowments Act praying for admission of representatives of Adi-Dravidas not only to the Committee but also on the Board of Commissioners constituted under the Act, with a view to protect their interests. As the petition is a short one may I request you, Sir, to kindly ask the Secretary to read it ?"

* The hon. the President :—"The hon. Member will hand over the petition."

The Secretary then read the abstract of the petition to the Council.

V

DEMANDS FOR SUPPLEMENTARY GRANTS FOR 1926-27.

Grant IX—General Administration.

The hon. Mr. A. Y. G. Campbell :—"Mr. President, I beg to move

'*that the Government be granted an additional sum of Rs.* 3,100 *under "Grant IX–General Administration—Legislative Bodies—Reserved" for providing funds for the House Committee of the Madras Legislative Council during* 1926–27.'

* The hon. Khan Bahadur Muhammad Usman Sahib Bahadur :—"I second it."

The motion was put to the House and carried and the grant was made.

* The hon. Mr. A. Y. G. Campbell :—"I beg to move

'*that the Government be granted an additional sum of Rs.* 1,53,400 *under "Grant IX—22. R.B. (b) General Administration—Legislative Bodies—Elections for Indian and Provincial Legislatures".*'"

The hon. Khan Bahadur Muhammad Usman Sahib Bahadur :—"I second it."

Mr. A. Ranganatha Mudaliyar :—"Surely, Sir, when the Government come in for additional grants, it is up to them to tell us a little more about the necessity for such additional grants, the items on which they propose to spend this money and why it was not foreseen at the time of the budget."

* The hon. the President :—"Is there no explanatory memorandum ?"

* The hon. Mr. T. E. Moir :—"Attention is invited to paragraph 2 of the explanatory memorandum circulated in connexion with this grant. It is purely a formal motion. The Accountant-General states that the minor head 'Elections—Indian and Provincial Legislatures' is intended to exhibit all charges on account of elections and that all the items referred to in the explanatory memorandum should be recorded under that head. Therefore it is necessary to obtain the vote of the House for this purpose. This is purely a formal matter and it is explained in paragraph 2 of the memorandum."

Diwan Bahadur P. C. Ethirajulu Nayudu :—"May I request the hon. the Finance Member to let us know what was the amount sanctioned last time for this purpose ? I hope he will let us have some explanation."

* The hon. Mr. T. E. Môir :—"I am afraid that the information is not contained in the papers which I have in my hand, but I can let him know if he will kindly remind me."

Diwan Bahadur P. C. Ethirajulu Nayudu :—"In this connexion, I should like to bring to the notice of the Council that last time the arrangements that were made for the conduct of elections were inadequate. Many of the voters had to return home without giving their votes, for they had no time to wait until the polling officers were able to attend to them and record their votes. That was due to want of sufficient number of polling officers. It is absolutely impossible for anybody to record more than 200 or 300 votes. So, Government should issue instructions to Collectors to make proper arrangements and to appoint a sufficient number of polling officers. Otherwise the money spent will be a mere waste. So, I request the hon. the Finance Member and the Member in charge of elections to give their consideration to this aspect of the question."

11-30 a.m. * Mr. J. A. Saldanha :—"I beg also to lay stress on the point raised by my hon. Friend. An assurance was given during the last meeting that the number of polling stations would be increased and care would be taken to see that no polling station was more than four or five miles from the residence of the voters. I find, Sir, that no orders have been issued to that effect and there is no prospect of any such orders being issued in the near future. In some places the polling station is about ten or fifteen miles from the residence of the voters and the reason given in that case is that those places are on the frontier of a taluk and that the nearest polling station belongs to a different taluk. I hope, Sir, that Government would issue orders in this respect. I may in this case refer to a village of Suda in the Karkal taluk. The nearest polling station in the same taluk is at a distance of ten or fifteen miles from that village whereas the villagers can go to a polling station not more than three or four miles but situated in the adjoining Udipi taluk.

"Government have not also notified the date of the next elections; that is a matter of some importance and so it should be notified as early as possible."

* Sriman Biswanath Das Mahasayo :—"Mr. President, Sir, I beg to move

'*that the allotment of Rs. 1,53,400 be reduced by Rs. 10.*'

"In commending this resolution to the sense of the House, I should like to place certain facts before it. Our Presidency and the Bombay Presidency have got the system of plural voting. The Bombay Government have provided some means to get over the difficulty caused by the presence of illiterate voters. Very often they come under the influence of influential and wealthy agents. In order to avoid that, the Bombay Government have adopted a different system of ballot papers from ours. The candidates are represented in the ballot papers both in writing and also by means of certain symbols or colours. While the literate voters are guided by reading the names of the candidates, the illiterate ones are guided by the colour of the paper and by the respective symbols. In the Bombay system, all are practically regarded as illiterate voters. The result is that there is a free exercise of the franchise without any undue influence from the agents. The

secrecy of the ballot is preserved. But in Madras, the illiterate voter has to go to the polling officer and declare the name of the candidate of his choice before the polling officer and in the presence of all the agents. Practically, the benefits of the secret ballot are denied to him. The disadvantages accruing from such a system are numerous. The illiterate voter is brought under the influence of very able and influential agents. In the second place, even the literate voter is made to declare before the polling officers that he is illiterate so that he might declare the name of the candidate of his choice before the agents. Thus the agents secure all the benefits of open voting. Unfortunately, more than 60 per cent of the voters are illiterate and if we take into consideration the results of this forced system of open voting we can almost say that almost 90 per cent of the voters have to vote openly. Therefore, Sir, the benefits of a secret ballot are denied here and thus the constituencies are made pocket boroughs. In order to put an end to this system, certain members of the Legislative Council made a representation to the hon. the Law Member to change the system of voting. My recollection is that there were members from both sides of the House. The hon. the Law Member promised to appoint a committee and take necessary action. I would therefore request the Government to inform us whether any action has been taken in the matter.

"Secondly, Sir, I have to refer to a matter which is purely a local one concerning my district. The polling stations in Ganjam are situated at the headquarters of zamindars. Some zamindars serve as agents of the parties and thus their influence is brought to bear upon the voters who go to those polling stations. Practically, there is no free voting in such places. Therefore, I would request the hon. the Law Member to instruct the Collector to shift the polling stations from the headquarters of the zamindars. There are many convenient places near the headquarters of the zamindars which are easily accessible to the voters. For instance, near Khallikotte there is Keshapore, near Mandasa there is Haripore. If the Government remove the polling stations from the headquarters of the zamindars, then alone will there be the free exercise of the franchise. With these remarks, I commend the motion for the acceptance of the House."

Diwan Bahadur M. KRISHNAN NAYAR :—"Sir, so far as the district of Malabar is concerned, I associate myself entirely with the remarks made by my hon Friend Mr. Biswanath Das. I know, Sir, that there is difference of opinion on this subject and probably my hon. Friends coming from the other districts have reasons to be satisfied with the existing system. Probably, in these districts, the system works well. But I confine my remarks exclusively to the district of Malabar. I happened to be a member of the committee to which reference was made by Mr. Das. The hon. Sir C. P. Ramaswami Ayyar proposed to hold a meeting to consider this question; but since there were many differences of opinion amongst the members of the committee, I believe the meeting was not held. As regards Malabar, the illiterate voters are allowed to go before the polling officers and openly declare the names of the candidates for whom they want to vote. What happens is this. In Malabar there are always more than two candidates though there are only two seats. Some of these candidates are supported by very influential persons, say the janmis who have a number of tenants under them. These janmis possess immense influence and power over the tenant voters. In what I am going to say I do not want to be understood as referring to any

particular individuals. I am only referring to the existing practice. For instance, a particular candidate has got the support of very influential janmis. Consequently, the tenant voters who may happen to be literate are made to declare by the janmis before the polling officers that they are illiterate so that they may declare aloud the names of the candidates for whom they vote and thus ensure that the tenants vote only for the candidates supported by their janmi masters. Thus the agents of the candidates are in a position to ascertain to whom a particular voter voted. I confine myself for the time being only to Malabar. Personally, I know of cases where even schoolmasters were made to say that they were illiterate." (Laughter.)

* Mr. K. PRABHAKARAN TAMPAN :—" Was that due to the influence of the janmis ?"

* Diwan Bahadur M. KRISHNAN NAYAR :—" I am prepared to name the janmis."

* The hon the PRESIDENT :—" Order, order. It is not necessary."

* Diwan Bahadur M. KRISHNAN NAYAR :—" Such people were made to say that they were illiterate. Of course the polling officers have no power to hold an enquiry. But certain polling officers, on representations being made to them that particular schoolmasters have declared themselves to be illiterate, made enquiries and the voters stood perplexed. I refer to these circumstances only for the purpose of showing that the object of free voting can be secured so far at any rate as the Malabar district is concerned only if the present system is dispensed with. I associate myself with all that fell from my hon. Friend Mr. Biswanath Das.

" In this connexion, I wish also to mention one or two matters so that if it is not too late the hon. Mr. Campbell might take steps to rectify them. Some hon. Members referred to the inadequacy of the number of polling stations. As a matter of fact, in Malabar some voters have to walk 12 or 13 miles to go to the polling stations. It is a great hardship both to the voters and the candidates. To remedy this defect, the number of polling stations has to be increased. I believe this Council will be prepared to vote the necessary amount to rectify these defects.

11-45 a.m. " Another thing that I wish to bring to the notice of the hon. Member is that there are polling stations in Malabar very inconveniently situated. To take a particular instance just to illustrate my point, there are two polling stations known by the names of Mankarai and Parli in the taluk of Palghat. Persons, whose amsams or villages are attached to the latter polling station, Parli, sometimes have to walk over a distance of over 12 miles, whereas the other polling station, namely, Mankarai, is only two miles off. If greater care is taken in the arrangement of the villages which are attached to these different polling stations,—I know there is considerable difficulty in arranging these different villages satisfactorily, I believe however it is possible to arrange them more satisfactorily than at present—it will serve the interests of all concerned.

" Then, Sir, I wish to know whether it is possible for the hon. Member to give information as to the approximate date, if not the exact date, of the elections. The Viceroy has said in his opening speech to the Legislative bodies in Simla the other day that the elections would be held in November. If it is possible for the hon. Member to enlighten us more accurately, as to the date when the elections will be held, we shall feel obliged."

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Rai Bahadur Sir K. VENKATAREDDI NAYUDU :—" Mr. President, Sir, I sympathise with the hon. Members who have spoken before and I rise to point out certain difficulties in the way. I hope they will not mistake me.

" There are two reasons why it will cause great inconvenience to some of us if anything like a general revision either of the polling stations or of the methods of polling were to be introduced at this stage. Sir, I think there is a saying in English that eternal vigilance is the price of liberty, and if eternal vigilance is the price of liberty, I think eternal vigilance is also required in matters like these. If these suggestions were made two or three months ago, the Government would have been in a position to look to them and remedy the grievances."

* Sriman BISWANATH DAS Mahasayo :—" Just for information, Sir, I must say these suggestions were made four or five months back."

Rai Bahadur Sir K. VENKATAREDDI NAYUDU :—" I have no quarrel with my hon. Friend. So far as the requisition is confined to a particular district or a particular polling station, certainly I have nothing to say. Take, for instance, my own case. I have 80 polling stations in my constituency, and I have issued letters which cost me from two to three hundred rupees, and I have to give the names of the polling stations and the villages attached to them so that, if anything like a general revision is made, the result will be that I have to repeat the process.

" Again, Sir, if a system like the one obtaining in Bombay is to be introduced, we have to appoint agents, who would be in a position to explain to the voters the method of voting. And if, for instance, a coloured system, or whatever it may be, is introduced, it will take some time for the voters to understand the system, not that I object to the system at all. I was myself a member of the committee to which reference has been made by the hon. Member for Malabar. It did meet once, and because we could not come to any definite conclusion or even a reasonable agreement, we had to put it off. Well, Sir, that is another matter.

" Then there is a second point which I should like to impress upon the hon. Members of this House. I would prefer them not to lay much stress upon these matters. The question, for instance, that literate voters are brought forward and made to say that they are illiterate, on account of certain influence worked upon them, would have a very mischievous result indeed. I do not deny there may be cases in this district or that district, individual and rare cases, but remember, if you are to press that point that your voters are so ignorant or so much subject to extraneous influences, a plea may be made three years hence, when the Royal Commission comes in, that your voters are not fit to be voters. Just fancy for yourself what the consequence of that would be. We have been often told from responsible quarters in Parliament that our further progress and reforms would depend upon the education of the electorate, and here we are telling in this House that our voters do not know how to vote. I refuse to believe it. I know there will be some cases, but they are so rare that undue importance need not be attached to them. By all means use your local influence, extend the education, and see that these practices are not allowed, but, for goodness sake, do not give too much importance to them lest they should take advantage of such instances as these."

* Mr. K. PRABHAKARAN TAMPAN :—" Sir, I had not the remotest idea of intervening in this debate, but certain statements made by my hon. Friend, Mr. Krishnan Nayar, regarding the janmis that they used their influence and made a schoolmaster say that he was illiterate and so on have to be commented upon. I have heard that story myself. It seems he is under the impression that any stick is good enough to beat the janmi with."

* Diwan Bahadur M. KRISHNAN NAYAR :—" No, no, certainly not."

* Mr. K. PRABHAKARAN TAMPAN :—" Sir, it is not a janmi alone that has done it. A vakil has done so. A medical practitioner has done worse things. I am prepared to give their names, if necessary. There are abuses among all classes of people. But this is a different matter.

" So far as the suggestion itself is concerned, I am perfectly unconcerned. If the Government want to adopt such a system, they are welcome to do so. Neither my constituency nor myself have the least objection."

* The hon. Mr. A. Y. G. CAMPBELL :—" Mr. President, Sir, hon. Members of this House will, I am sure, realize that the Government are as anxious as any of them are, that all the electors should have full opportunity of recording their votes and of recording them freely and subject to no undue influence. Some of the hon. Members who have spoken have referred to the arrangements for polling stations in certain districts as inadequate. That question was, I believe, discussed in this House some time ago and the Government promised to issue orders directing that more polling stations should be provided. Instructions have been already issued enclosing copies of the remarks of the members of this House. Should any member be dissatisfied with the arrangements made, he should draw the attention of the Collectors concerned to the inconvenience caused. The speeches that have been made here will be communicated to the Collectors. But, as has been pointed out by the hon. Member for East Godavari, it will probably cause a considerable amount of inconvenience if much change is made in the number of polling stations.

" The hon Member for Malabar also asked for some information as to the date on which elections are likely to be held. We can make no definite announcement on that point until we have heard from the Government of India on which date they wish the elections to the Legislative Assembly to be held. But, so far as we can forecast at present, it is likely that the elections will take place somewhere in the neighbourhood of the 8th of November.

" The hon. Member for Ganjam referred to two points. I will take his second point first, viz., that some of the polling stations in Ganjam should be shifted from the headquarters of the zamindars' estates. That, again, is a matter for the Collector. I feel sure that hon. Members realize that the Government cannot interfere with the discretion of the Collectors in such details. We can only issue general instructions. The remarks I made in dealing with the number of polling stations apply equally here also.

" The last and most important matter with which I have to deal is the question of the voting by illiterate voters. Now, we are, of course, most anxious as I have already remarked, that the voters should not be subject to

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any undue influence in recording their votes. The present rule, so far as the Madras Presidency is concerned is as follows:

'If the elector is unable to read the ballot paper and applies for assistance in doing so, the Presiding Officer shall read it for him. If required by the elector to mark the ballot paper the Presiding Officer shall mark it according to the directions of the elector and give it back to him to be put into the ballot box.

'In the case of every elector whose ballot paper is marked in this manner by the Presiding Officer, a note shall be made on the corresponding counterfoil, form III-A, by the Presiding Officer of the reason why it was so marked.'

"For the conduct of the elections in 1923, the following instructions were issued by the Government:

'Returning Officers are requested to point out to all Presiding Officers that marking of incapacitated votes under Regulation 24 should be done by the Presiding Officer at his own table and in the presence of the candidates or their polling agents; and these have the right to hear the voters' request and to watch the Presiding Officer when he marks the ballot paper.'

"The reason for the presence of the candidates or their agents is, of course, to prevent charges against the Presiding Officer that he has abused his power to mark the paper on behalf of the illiterate voters.

"Now, Sir, this question was discussed in this House last March. Then, there was considerable difference of opinion as to the desirability of adopting the Bombay system or any other system suggested. The Bombay system of giving each candidate a symbol was objected to on the ground that some symbols would be regarded as lucky. Objection was taken to the use of colours on the ground that some electors may be colour-blind. Well, Sir, I think that at this stage it is too late to make any change for the coming elections. The matter has been considerd by a Committee, and as no agreement was come to among the members of the Committee, the Government decided that the present system should be continued during the ensuing elections. It is possible to issue more detailed instructions that the elector shall if possible record his vote himself. Although he may be colour-blind or illiterate, most electors, I think, are able to count. The names of the candidates are placed one below the other and it is possible for the Presiding Officer to explain to the elector, 'the first candidate is so-and-so, the second candidate is so-and-so, and the third candidate so-and-so. If you want to vote for the first candidate, you must put the cross against his name,' and so on. I propose to consider the desirability of issuing instructions on these lines:

'If an elector is illiterate and asks the Presiding Officer to read out the ballot paper, the Presiding Officer shall, in the presence only of the candidates, or their agents after telling the elector to give no indication for whom he is going to vote, read the ballot paper to the elector and explain to him the order in which the candidates are arranged and the method of voting. The Presiding Officer shall then direct the elector to proceed to one of the compartments of the polling station and act as prescribed in rule 23. If the elector expresses his inability to mark the ballot paper himself and if the Presiding Officer is satisfied that the elector is unable to do so, the Presiding Officer shall, in the presence only of the candidates or their agents, note in the counter-foil the reason for his inability, ask the elector for whom he wishes to vote, mark the voting paper accordingly and give it to him to be deposited in the ballot box'." 12 noon.

Rai Bahadur T. M. NARASIMHACHARLU:—"Mr. President, Sir, with reference to the proposed instructions just now read by the hon. Member, I think there will be some difficulty. These instructions are intended for the vote being given properly by illiterate persons. The Presiding Officer tells the voter that No. 1 is so-and-so, No. 2 is so-and-so and that he can mark the votes. Being an illiterate man, as the paper is given to him he may

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turn it upside down and if he wants to vote for the second man from the top, he would certainly vote for the second man from the bottom. There will be this danger which will have to be considered by the Government."

The motion was by leave withdrawn.

The demand was put to the House and carried and the grant was made.

Grant XV.

* The hon. Mr. A. Y. G. CAMPBELL :—" I beg to move, Sir,

'*that the Government be granted an additional appropriation of Rs.* 14,816 *under " Grant XV—Police—Reserved " on account of the employment of a temporary additional staff of one Deputy Superintendent of Police, one sub-inspector, eight head constables and twenty-six constables for work connected with the reclamation of Kallars in the Tanjore district, viz.,* 26-*C.—Police—District Executive Force—*1. *District Police—Police Force—General—Temporary.*

Item of expenditure.	*Ultimate cost per annum.*	*Cost during 1926-27, eight months' charges.*
	Rs.	*Rs.*
1 *Deputy Superintendent* (*Rs.* 300)	3,600	2,400
1 *Sub-Inspector* (*Rs.* 60)	720	480
8 *Head constables* (*Rs.* 27)	2,592	1,728
26 *Constables* (*Rs.* 17)	5,304	3,536
Allowances.		
Uniform allowance—34 (*Rs.* 1)	408	272
Travelling allowance	9,000	6,000
Honoraria (*Rewards*)	750	500
Contract contingencies	750	750
Supplies and services—General—Miscellaneous.	1,200	800
Total ..	24,324	16,216

Deduct cost of one Inspector (*Rs.* 175) *for eight months who will not be employed and for whom provision has been included in the Civil Budget Estimate—Rs.* 1,400.

Net extra cost during 1926-27 *is Rs.* 14,816.' "

The hon. Khan Bahadur MUHAMMAD USMAN SAHIB Bahadur :—"I second the motion."

The demand was put to the House and carried and the grant was made.

VI

ANNOUNCEMENT REGARDING DAYS ALLOTTED FOR NON-OFFICIAL BILLS.

* The hon. the PRESIDENT :—" I have to inform the House that under Rule 6 of the Legislative Council Rules His Excellency the Governor has been pleased to allot three days for the transaction of the business of non-official Bills during this meeting."

VII

A BILL TO RE-ENACT THE MADRAS HINDU RELIGIOUS ENDOWMENTS ACT, 1923.

* The hon. the RAJA OF PANAGAL :—" Mr. President, Sir, I beg to move

'*that the Bill to re-enact the Madras Hindu Religious Endowments Act,* 1923, *be read in Council.*'